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SUBJECT: STRONG INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION AT ARMENIAN EXPO

1. (U) More than 180 businesses participated in the 5th annual Armenian Expo in Yerevan on September 14-17. The conference organizer, LOGOS EXPO, designed the event to identify new markets for Armenian products, encourage foreign investment in Armenia, demonstrate the strength of the Armenian economy and promote international business cooperation. According to LOGOS EXPO, total business participation increased by approximately 11 percent compared to 2004. Many returning vendors requested additional exhibit space and total exhibition space was 38 percent greater than last year. No U.S. businesses participated in this year's event.

2. (U) Compared to 2004, international participation also increased. Companies from more than 15 countries including Russia, Germany, Japan, Iran, Georgia, Belarus, Indonesia, and China participated in the event. A LOGOS EXPO representative told us, however, that no U.S. businesses participated this year. Post's Economic Affairs Officer spoke at the Expo about ways to enhance trade between Armenia and the U.S. A representative from Development Alternatives, Incorporated, a USAID contract partner, also made a presentation about promoting local business development and agribusiness.

3. (U) Conference organizer LOGOS EXPO is a private company that has organized more than 32 trade fairs since its founding in 1999. The Armenian Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Union of Producers and Businessmen and the National Association of Publishers officially supported Armenia EXPO 2005. Local media extensively covered the event. Sectors represented included: construction, transportation, agriculture, information technology, dairy production, confectionary, publishing and tourism. Participating businessmen told us that public attendance rates were very high and appeared to exceed previous years. They said they hope that this event will increase foreign investment in Armenia and advance the image of Armenia as a regional trade hub.

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